

# About the Book and the Author

## Vedic View and Way of Life

*The way you live your life needs to unfold the view of life. Your language, music, dance, attitude towards elders, spouse, children, money, success and your own body-mind-sense complex should have intimate bearing on the way of life, says Swami Dayananda Saraswati.*

*The Swamiji points out in the book, **Vedic View and Way of Life**, that this is how the Vedas have prescribed the life pattern. The book is based on public lectures rendered by the Swamiji, whose 80th birthday falls this year.*

*The Vedic view and way of life are never at variance, says the Swamiji. How to understand that way of life? We have to imbibe this from elders, who, though they might not have read the Vedas in detail, have imbibed them from people who knew over the generations.*

*In this series of talks, given in Chennai in 2008, the Swamiji has tried to explore the profundity of the Vedic culture unveiled by generations of elders to the people of Bharat. He is happy that the Vedic vision of oneness is manifest in the Hindu culture throughout Bharat.*

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*In this issue, **Tattvāloka** gives edited extracts from the book.*



# Vedic View and Way of Life

*The world is viewed by a Bharatiya as Bhagavan.  
This totality of vision is the vision of the Vedas.*

SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

## 1: Value Structure Holds the Vedic View

Every form of our daily life is but an expression of the *Bharatiya* culture, which has its roots in the *Vedas*. Everything we do, from our saying *Namaste* to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, is fundamentally based on its teachings.



Everything that we do may not come from our study of the *Vedas*, because most of us do not study it; it comes from what we know as *vriddha-vyavahara*, the value structure and behaviour patterns of the elders in the society and family. They give us the knowledge of what one has to do, what one needs to avoid, and also the priorities in life.

We imbibe all these from the elders. They themselves might not have studied them in detail, but they had imbibed them from people who knew. Thus, over generations and millennia the ancient teachings have been passed over from generation to generation, and it is not an

ordinary thing. It is the very substance of our culture.

### Everything Is Isvara

If you ask anybody who belongs to the *Bharatiya* culture: "Where is *Bhagavan*?" the answer is always: "*Bhagavan* is everywhere, everything is God." This is *Bharat*. That everything is *Isvara, Bhagavan*, is the *Vedic* view. All that is there is God--inside, outside, every element,



every direction, everything in and of this vast cosmos.

A dancer may not know what the *Veda* is, but before she starts to perform, she touches the platform on which she is going to dance and asks for pardon. Why? The stage is sacred. Only a person who has the *Bharatiya* culture, the vision that *Isvara* is everything, can do this. The one who confronts the world and the world that is objectified by one's senses and by other means of knowing, is all *Isvara*. All that one knows through the means of knowledge, known as *shabdha pramana*, the *Veda*, is also *Isvara*. What is revealed by the *Veda* is *Isvara*, since the *Veda* itself is non-separate from *Isvara*. This is the *Vedic* vision and our culture is based upon this vision.

This makes an equation between you, the subject, and *Isvara*, who is everything, and the object you

confront, a micro-object like an electron, or a macro-object like the flower, the star, the cosmos. The subject is *Isvara*, the object is *Isvara*. This is the vision. It percolates through *vridhdha-vyavahara*, throughout Bharat.

### Whole, Not Part

If everything is one whole, you are not part of the whole, you are the whole. What is whole is not made up of parts; it is one whole. The teacher-student situation is also integral to the *Vedic* way of life--in every *Upanishad*, we find a dialogue going on because what is involved is a vision that is to be understood and assimilated. In the talks that follow, we are going to get into the forest of the *Veda*; we will unfold the vision and cover a way of life to receive this vision. All that is necessary for this vision, and its significant features, we will cover.

## 2. Bridges to the Vision of the Vedas

Every individual, by nature, is insecure right from childhood. The human child, being what it is, is 100 per cent helpless. Any living organism wants to live. It is innate, instinctive. So, it always has the fear

of death. It is in-born. The urge to live comes along with the fear of death.

The human child was secure before it was born, but after birth it does not have the capacity, the skills,





the wherewithal to survive. So, the child's helplessness is compensated by the trust it has for the one who cares for it. However, when this absolute trust is broken time and again by inconsistencies, the child begins to gather all its unconscious core issues. Insecurity is the very essence of a person's ego. When there is so much insecurity, we cannot be giving and sharing, we can never be big of heart; we are small and limited.

### Consumer to Contributor

The child who is appreciated does not feel totally helpless, does not feel, 'I am useless,' which it would otherwise think and begin to loath itself. By spending quality time with your child and making him or

her feel secure and well-loved, you can neutralise the feeling of helplessness and then the child will think, "I am a somebody."

Showing overt appreciation and love for the child and allowing it to grow with self-pride, self-dignity, self-respect, self-worth and self-esteem, is all that is required.

We are all consumers as children, but as we grow up to be mature adults we need to become contributors. One who consumes the minimum, only enough to maintain the body, and contributes the maximum, is a *Mahatma* in our country, in the *Vedic* vision.

Everybody is born small because everybody is born insecure and, therefore, a consumer. You become a contributor only when you are very secure on your own feet, your emotional feet. It requires initiative; it has to be accomplished.

The child's trust is total, but through the inconsistencies of life the child becomes confused and its unconscious gets loaded with complexes. When the child grows up and marries, there is a trusted person again, and all the complexes and insecurities will come out on that person.



That person also has his or her own unconscious, and projects it on the spouse. Thus, the couple suffers not knowing what is happening and not knowing what can be done. It is all a projection from the unconscious. The person sees things before, when one was a child. You need to get connected again, to the one who is infallible. Everybody is found wanting, because everybody is fallible.

So, you cannot put your whole heart and soul in one place. You keep looking for the infallible, and that infallible should be connected to you. The *Vedic* view of life makes sure that you have this, because it is already there. You are necessarily included in the total and every cell of yours and everyone else is pervaded by the *Maha*-order that is *Isvara*.

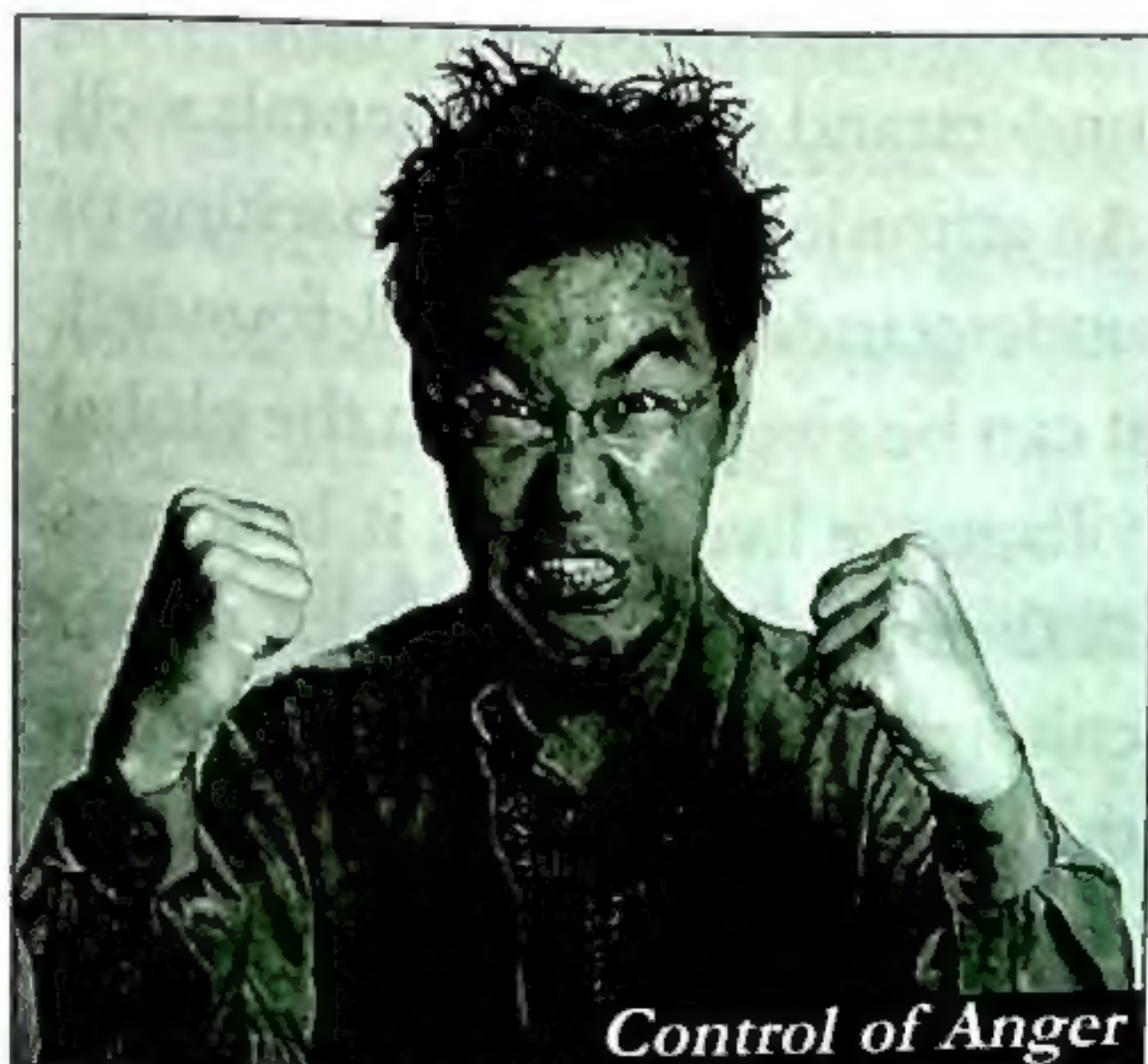
### **‘Fake It to Make It’**

The way of life should be such that it makes you grow into the bigness that you are capable of. The self-conscious, and, therefore, self-judging human being, has to free himself or herself from the fears that grip the person due to insecurity and develop self-trust.

To grow into a big person, and help others grow in our culture, you

need to take an initiative. By giving, you become a giver, you become big, and you become a contributor. Just use the will. Action is the key. Modern society in America has a new *Mantra*, ‘fake it and make it.’ To be kind, act kindly. If you act lovingly, you will discover love. Act it out; it will work. It is the simple act of caring, acting, and doing, which makes one become a caring person.

If you are caring, you know how not to get hurt. You can even care for the hurting person, because you do not get hurt. By not being angry, you will transcend anger. Here, you need to act it out. You refrain from acting angrily, and act as though you have no anger. Act like that. Even if you are angry, practise restraint,



***Control of Anger***



telling yourself, 'I will not victimise anybody with my anger. I have to release my anger, of course, but I will not victimise anyone.' How do you release your anger? You can write it out. Process it. You can get angry with *Bhagavan*; pray to him with all your emotions, frustration, and helplessness. Without victimising anybody, including yourself, process your anger by writing it out.

### Opening up the Heart

The world is not exactly as you see it; it is more than what you see. By seeing the truth of this, your attitude towards yourself and

towards the world will undergo a sea change--the change that makes you a person whose heart is so commodious that it can accommodate the world with all the people therein, with all their follies and your own too.

That is the opening which we call 'opening up' of one's heart. The *Vedic* view has got to be your view, if that is the truth. And the teaching is only to bring the *Vedic* view to your appreciation, to make you see as the *Vedas* see. To see yourself and the world as the *Vedas* see is such a blessing, and you are the inheritor of such a blessing.

## 3 . Understanding the Reality

To make intelligent choices in life our knowledge and attitudes have to be proper. We do not acquire them naturally; we need to understand the fundamentals well. An attitude without the backing of understanding is not well-founded; it can be swept away. In the global village we live in now, it becomes all the more important to know our culture that has been coming down the generations, why certain things are done the way they are done, and why we should know them; only

then we can make an intelligent choice.

The *Vedic* religion is rooted in knowledge and *Bhavana*. This *Bhavana* is not empty--a kind of visualisation or contrived attitude. It is based upon a vision, the vision of what is, because all that is here is *Isvara*.

### Form and Function

Everything in this world is considered *Satya*. Sometimes, we do not look at *Satya* as it is, but in our own way. Therefore, it becomes subjective. Projections are possible





with an object becoming the locus of our projection. A person can be mistaken for another person. The person is real, but our perception is wrong. Words like *Satya* are very important because they do not have an object but they are words revealing your understanding of the world. It is very important because what you pursue is what is *Satya* for you. Power is *Satya*, in your vision, or money is *Satya*.

For example, let us take a clay pot. The *Vedas* ask you a question. Can you see the pot without seeing the substance of which it is made? If the substance is clay, can you see

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the pot without seeing the clay?

What you are looking for is *Satya*. But if you call pot as *Satya*, what about the clay? The weight, nature, and attributes, such as brittleness, of the *Satya* pot all belong to clay. Therefore, what object will you refer to by the word *Satya*? Pot or clay?

Before the pot was born it was clay. After the pot is gone, it is going to be clay. Even when the pot is there, there is clay. However, the pot has a form and function. This is what we call *Srishti*. *Isvara-Srishti*. Even though it is a human creation, the possibility of making a pot is all in *Isvara-Srishti*. When you understand this, you come to know that the whole *Jagat*, including your body, mind, senses, is nothing but forms. Once you understand that all words and their meanings are nothing but forms, the whole *Vedic* way of life comes alive.

## 4. Vedic View: All That Is Here Is All-Knowledge *Isvara*

Life is nothing but forms. When you deal with forms, you are also endowed with a form. Without form you cannot deal with forms. We saw

the word, pot, like any other word, does not have a substantive. When you look at the pot you end up seeing the material it is made of, clay.



All the way you see only forms. Even time, past, present, future, is a form. What is the length of time for the concept of the present? You can even say that the current century is the present. So, the present is subject to infinite mathematical division. The present has no definite length of time but is subject to division into past, present, future.

So, is there any concept of time that is not subject to division? No, no matter what its length. The content of time is time consciousness, no matter what its length. Free from time, it is timeless.

Similarly, when you say, 'This is a body,' I would like to find out where the body is. A body is just a bunch of cells. It is amazing. The body is porous but you do not see that. If you look at the body with the microscope, you will never say, 'I love you.'

Please understand, this body is nothing but a form consisting of many forms, and put together, they are called *Srishti*. For example, the eye is a combination of the pupil,



the retina, etc, and any of them is not an eye, but put together in a certain way, they form an eye. Merely putting them together will also not make an eye; it has to function. It has to be intelligently put together, only then it is called *Srishti*.

Our physical body is a form that is intelligently put together. To explain a given gland, you have to use so many names, so

many words, each of which has a form, meaning. Words and their meanings are all that you have, all the way. What is being dealt with and the one who deals with it, are both words and their meanings.

### Reality and Perception

Our *Rishis* knew what this *Jagat* is all about; there is nothing to believe here. Our *Sastra* talks of realities. But reality is something that can be talked about only when it is understood. It is not a matter for belief. Your self-worth is exactly the worth that you have for your parents, culture, religion, tradition and the wisdom that comes down the tradition.

Unless you have self-worth,



there is no self-acceptance. Self-respect is not to be gained by titles or qualifications, but by owning up the self, the core person who remains untouched by these awards.

Without knowing, without understanding this vision, how can you have self-respect? Interference in a culture is so damaging. You must validate the child's heritage. That validation makes them flourish.

You dream; it is given to you. If you think of the sun, along comes with it space and time. Think of the earth, mountains, trees, rivers, people, all are there at once, including a body for yourself. In dream you create the entire *Jagat* and a body for yourself in the image of the person who is on the cot. You create this *Jagat* out of what? Out of your knowledge; it is all your knowledge. Please understand, the

whole dream creation, *Srishti*, is your knowledge. You are an individual, but you are *Isvara*, to all the people in the dream. You created all that is there in the dream. You pervade the dream; the subject and the object are you. Then you wake up, and everything resolves into you. The dreamer and the dreamt world, too, resolve into the waker. It is how the dream is; you think and, therefore, it exists.

### Valid Perception

Similarly, the world is your valid perception of what is. Your body is not your projection. In order to project you need a body with a mind; both are given. They are available for your appreciation, in *vyavahara*. This common appreciation is neither real nor subjective. It is neither false nor non-existent; it is in-between. I can use the word, *mithya*, for this reality. The pot is *mithya*.

That which draws its being from something else is *mithya*. Any form like pot has its being in the knowledge of what it is. When you understand this and look at the *Jagat*, you understand it as forms which are the meanings of words. You can say it is your knowledge of what is, and it is all intelligently put together.





There is nothing more than knowledge. It is the *Vedic* view, and it is supposed to be your view and vision. The *Vedas* are not meant for *Rishis*. *Rishis* have given the vision of the *Vedas* to us, to humanity.

### Knowledge of *Isvara*

In the *Vedic* vision, the *Jagat*, being what it is, is the only knowledge--knowledge of *Isvara*. He is the maker, and he is the material as well. For example, if there is the pot, there needs to be a pot-maker and there should be some material, clay.

Without clay or some other substance, the pot maker cannot make a pot, unless he makes it out of himself. The whole *Jagat* is one conscious being, in mo-

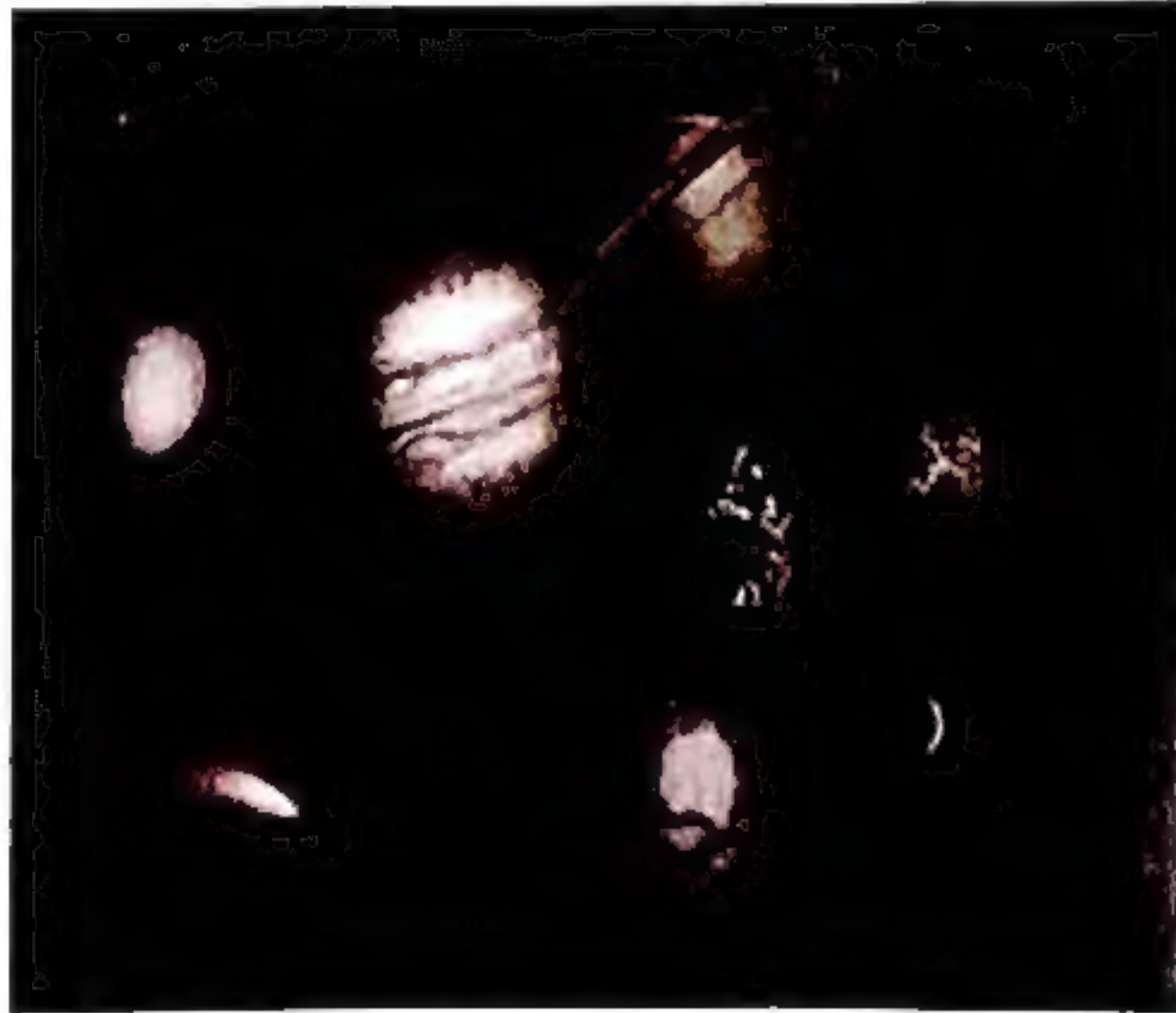
tion. Everything is moving, the whole universe is held in motion, by the grand force of gravitation.

The whole thing is a choreography of the all-knowledge, *Isvara*, the single dancer. People, elements, galaxies--are all different forms of

this dance, a dance being nothing but different forms of expression of the dancer. Any one thing we see, it is the same dancer. In the *Vedic* vision, there is nothing that is not *Isvara*. Therefore, the material is not separate from the conscious being, all knowledge, *Isvara*.

Sleep is a great example to show how there is no space and time consciousness or experience where there is no object, no world. When you look at everything, it is all given. The universe is given; possibilities are given.

So, there is nothing that you can really create, nothing. Everything is given. And this given can never be separate from the giver because what is



given is the knowledge of the giver. You view this entire *Jagat* as *Isvara*. This is the *Vedic* view of life and it has percolated throughout Bharat through the age-old mode of communication that is *vridhdha-vyavahara*.



## 5. Being Connected to the Infallible

The whole *Jagat* is but name and form, intelligently put together, with everything having its place in the scheme of things, serving a purpose. It means it is placed there intelligently. It is given. So, we are constrained to use the word, creation.



The moment you use the word, creation, the concept of the separate creator, different from the created object, is assumed. It seems obvious, but then, it is not true. For reasons that we have seen, the creation is non-separate from the creator, like in dream; the whole creation is the creator's knowledge.

So, too, the *Upanishad* reveals, this *Jagat* is created from a source who is all-knowledge and all-power, is all that is here, which has form and which is formless, known and unknown, is *Isvara*. Modern quantum physics tells us that everything you see is nothing but quantum objects. There is nothing tangible. At the quantum level there is no object separate from your knowledge. It is an object of knowledge. Therefore, the entire *Jagat* is a manifestation of the all-knowledge *Isvara*.

This is the *Vedic* view, the view of what is. Unless we have this view, we cannot be objective because without the view of what is, we live in our own world, of our own making. We do not see the world that is for public appreciation, but look at it through our own goggles. Certain things become objects of our liking, and so our way of looking at them is entirely different.

Certain other objects become objects of our dislike, or indifference and we do not bother about their existence. So, we do not look at things as they are. They are not just objects of knowledge, but objects conditioned by our own learning, likes, dislikes and indifference. Therefore, we are not in the world of public gaze. We are not in harmony with what is.





## Objectivity and Harmony

The *Vedic* view is an important view, a non-negotiable view. There is no choice to be objective or not. You need to be objective. There are situations in life that are pleasant and not that pleasant. You have to face them and respond to them. How are you going to do that?

The responsibility of a self-conscious individual is very great. To every situation you have to respond. Even if you need some help, and you get it, then you have to respond to the help. For some it is impossible to delegate work; it is also a response. The incapacity to delegate is a problem of needing to be in control. When you need to be in control, manipulation is inevitable.

You look at people differently and think that it is only you who can do the task at hand. You have no time to do it either. It is a problem, and you need to know that you have

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this problem. If you are totally programmed, like a cow is, then you have no choice. You will be responding to every situation according to the programme.

As a human being you are bound to be very confusing until you take charge of yourself. So, the Hindu way of life is in keeping with the *Vedic* view, that is, you have to be in harmony with **what is, which is *Isvara***. To be objective is to be in harmony with *Isvara*. Without *Isvara*, there is no objectivity; there is no pragmatism. To be pragmatic is to be objective, and to be objective is to acknowledge **what is, and what is, is *Isvara***. What choice do you have?

## What Is *Svakarma*?

The one from whom this entire *Jagat* has come into being in time and space, by whom it is sustained and pervaded, that *Isvara*, the rebuilding whom, through ***svakarma***, a human being gains success --so, the *Bhagavad Gita* says.

So, what is *svakarma*? *Svakarma* is one's duty, what is called for at a given time and place, in a given situation. For the human being, who is ruled by the mind, success can be gained only by being objective.



Real objectivity and pragmatism is to acknowledge the existence of what is. The reality of what you face, the reality of what others face, are both covered by *Isvara*. Your body is a manifestation of *Isvara's* knowledge, and it is given. Your *prana*, your senses, your mind, all your faculties are given.

What is given is not separate from the giver's knowledge and by assimilating the fact that this all-knowledge is manifest in the form of *Jagat* you will find your subjectivity at its minimum.

You have to say it is the minimum because, in spite of security being your nature, it is security that you are seeking. Therefore, to reduce your subjectivity, to be able to respond to every situation objectively, you need to recognise *Isvara* who is all-knowledge. How do you assimilate 'all-knowledge' *Isvara*? You recognise all-knowledge in terms of order. The whole thing is one whole, and we view this whole as so many orders.

### ***Isvara* Manifests as Order**

There is a physical order consisting of the physical world--the solar system, the galaxies, the

cosmos. The life forms comprise the biological order. No life form is outside the biological order, and no system is outside the physical order. The *Isvara*, all-knowledge, is this physical and biological order.

There are several other orders such as the physiological order, the psychological order, the *karmic* and the *dharmic* order, the order of time and space. Knowledge is *Isvara*, memory is also *Isvara*. Every capacity, skill, possibility, everything is *Isvara*.

There is no individual who is independent of the total. You are highly connected, connected to the creator, and connected to the creation. Psychology is your unconscious. Your own fullness manifests in that form. You can call it emotion for want of another word, but really, it is a manifestation,



*Galaxies*



a dynamic form of the essential nature of yourself. Jealousy, hatred, fear, loneliness, all these fall within the psychological order.

In your loneliness, unhappiness and pain there is so much *Isvara*. You have to accept that. It is *Isvara's* order. It is a very, very unmistakable presence. In pain you need not look for *Isvara*. He is very much there in the form of your pains. Can you see that?

That extra seeing is required, the change in the scales of your vision that lets you recognise the presence of *Isvara* so clearly, that you can never be isolated from *Isvara*. At what time will you be away from *Isvara*? You are always pervaded by his presence, in every moment, in every situation.

The all-knowledge *Isvara*, in the form of one *Maha-order*, whose



presence is always with me, is infallible. I am now connected to the infallible, secure, safe, very safe. I accept my unconscious, I embrace it, welcome it, because it is all *Isvara*. This is how I solve the sense of isolation from the whole. This awareness is not ordinary; it liberates. To be objective is to recognise this particular fact. Then, I am called upon to respond to various situations within this whole. How does that take place? It is the way of living.

## 6. Being in Harmony with Isvara

What Is, is *Isvara* who is addressed by different names, each name having a revealing meaning. *Isvara* can also be invoked as a *Devata*. When you invoke a *Devata*, you are invoking *Isvara* in a given aspect of

*Isvara's* manifestation. In any one form you can invoke *Isvara*, but any one form cannot be the total *Isvara* because you look upon it as an object.

Please understand, the whole vision of our *Vedic* view and way



of life being what it is--everything is a manifestation of *Ishvara*. You invoke *Ishvara*, the total, in a single manifestation every day.

### Desire-action-consequence

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says, 'I am in the form of desire, Arjuna.' A desire may not conform to *Dharma*, for you do not have any control over that desire arising. Desires occur and have their own causes, most of which are in the subconscious and unconscious.

If certain desires are not in keeping with *Dharma*, you just do not attempt to fulfil any of them, you do not back them up. To fulfil

a desire, you plan and take action. This must be done only if what you do is in keeping with *Dharma*. This is the *Vedic* view and way of life. Desire is also the Lord, is the *Vedic* view of life. The action to fulfil it without transgressing *Dharma* is the *Vedic* view of life.

That a desire occurs in your head is within the order of *Ishvara*, it is given. There is nothing wrong with it and the Lord does not say that you should not have desires. The reality is, you have no say over them, and so nobody can be expected not to have desires.

However, with respect to action, you have a choice. Once the action is committed, the result is taken care of, inasmuch as the action and its result are connected; it is given. But, the choice is yours, whether to act or not. Therefore, literally you have the freedom in your hands. You have a choice in your action, *karmanyeva adhikara te*. *Bhagavan* says, 'I am in the form of any desire in your head.'

Therefore, do not complain about your desires. But when you fulfil those desires, make sure that your actions do not go against what is universally accepted as an ethical value structure, the norms that everyone has to conform to.







### What Is *Dharma*?

All of us need to have a common basis upon which to exercise our choice. Only if the basis is universal will every human being take to it without being taught. Nobody can plead ignorance of *Dharma*—the universal value structure.

Ask a few questions, such as, ‘Would you like to be cheated, robbed, beaten, assaulted?’ The universal answer will be, ‘No.’ *Dharma* is universal. Everybody expects that all others should be compassionate, sympathetic, understanding, giving. It is universally understood by people without being taught through what is called common sense; it is innate.

Since we all know that, since it is the same for all of us, it is given and it is universal. *Dharma* is in the

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minds of human beings and *Dharma* is protected only if the person following the *Dharma* is protected.

All over the world there are people who uphold *Dharma*, without even being religious. You do not need religion for this, because *Dharma* is given. Appreciation of *Dharma* as a manifestation of *Isvara* makes you a person who is in touch with *Isvara*, in harmony with *Isvara*. It makes you totally objective.

Desire and *Dharma* are both manifestations of *Isvara* and therefore, to fulfil a desire you cannot go against *Dharma*. But then, the problem is, desires have power, force, pressure. When a desire remains unfulfilled, the force born out of desire causes anger and drives you to go against *Dharma*. Desire is *Isvara*, but you cannot hurt yourself in fulfilling the desire by going against *Dharma*, because *Dharma* is also *Isvara*. However, you can fulfil all the desires if you can act without going against *Dharma*.

Living is dynamic; you acquire new desires as you keep living. But *Dharma* remains the same. When we assimilate both desire and *Dharma*, we do not succumb to the pressure of desire.



Wanting to gain, to achieve, and wanting to avoid, to get rid of, creates a lot of pressure when you do not have space within. Whereas, if there is leisure within, satisfaction centred on yourself, you can manage all these likes and dislikes. There is an inner leisure that allows you to conform to *Dharma*. Desires become simple instruments of life only when you do not transgress *Dharma*. The end never justifies the means. Consequently the Hindu way of life is non-aggressive because *Dharma* is the means and it is the end as well.

*Purushartha* is that which is sought after by all human beings. Who does not want security, money, power, fame? Then people want satisfaction, leisure, happiness. These are all different avenues of satisfaction, *kama*, that people seek. *Artha* and *kama* are common to all. To be in charge of yourself is to be in harmony with *Dharma*, which is *Isvara*, and this is known as *Purushartha*.

Desires, being what they are, will drive you to cut corners for

fulfilment and, therefore, you need to know how to say 'No.' This is where you require the help of *satsang*, daily prayers, discipline. All these are important because they help you gather strength.

You ask for help and you have a support system; you are not helpless. The will can become weak for many reasons which are also within the psychological order. Your enemies may or may not be outside, but they are certainly inside. You work towards *Dharma* and that is success. Do your *svakarma* which is in conformity to the universal ethical norms.

*Dharma* is so very dynamic that it is very easy to wrongly interpret situations. The *Mahabharata* shows us that even great people are subject to some wrong leanings. *Svakarma* is what you are supposed to be and





on certain occasions. The *Veda* has a vision, and it does not want you to under-achieve. You are highly connected.

Only when you establish that connection, can you claim the wholeness that is you, that is yours by nature. It is neither possible nor necessary for you to get rid of your likes and dislikes. You just need to remove their power of making you transgress *Dharma*. It is your aim, your culture of 'duty'.

## Vedic View and Way of Life

Our understanding of duty has kept us going. Your duty, *svakarma*, is the task to be done not only at this time, at this place, but in other places and times as well. Conduct that is purely etiquette is also important. So you need to know where you are, what the situation is, and what is proper here. Your presence should be such that it does not disturb anybody, but is welcomed wherever you go, in any situation. It is possible, for this is our culture.

## 7. *Svakarma Is Isvara*

*Dharma* is a *Purushartha*. You then need to employ your will and initiate a process of growth so that you conform to *Dharma* without any conflicts while playing different roles in life. Each role we play in

life--father, brother, husband, friend,--may undergo changes relevant to given situations and these play a very important element in deciding your duty, *svakarma*.

Unless you have space between the person and role, they become one and the same. Understanding life as role-playing is not seen in any other culture. The 'I' is invariable, but the roles are variable. You do not have a choice whether to go by this or go against it, for you cannot avoid role playing and there is no role without problems.



Role play





Response to Stimuli

## What Is the Goal of Life?

Even when you think of *Bhagavan*, you are playing a role; the role of a devotee. Therefore, everything that you do has got to be a role. Life is meant to be lived and to be truly alive you need to be alive to **what is**. Living in your own world full of your own apprehensions, projections, likes and dislikes is not living. You are supposed to reduce these projections to become more real and alive to **what is**. This is living.

One thing is inevitable, and that is relating. You need to relate and you need to respond to the stimuli. Relating implies response. Now, these objects to which you relate always change, whereas the I, that relates, does not undergo any change, being invariably present.

There are only two things, one is I, the other is everything else.

When these two are there, subject-objects, seer-seen, I am invariably present in every role I play. The roles I play elicit different responses with relevance to what I relate to.

The relevance is the script I am supposed to follow. That is the space between the role and the person. It has nothing to do with physical space and nothing to do with time. The role is the person; the role stands where the person stands. However, it is important to understand, the person is not the role. The person is free of all the roles he or she plays in life. Once the word 'individual' is used, the 'total' has already come to embrace the individual.

In a relationship, if there is something absolute, this is it--the **individual-total**. It is the only relationship that does not undergo any change whatsoever, no matter who is relating to the total, *Isvara*. That person, related to *Isvara*, is a *bhakta*, a devotee. This understanding makes your life objective; it allows you to play your roles appropriately and follow the scripts, without being affected.

Just a shift in your understanding; you are a devotee, basically. When you



understand, *sva-karma* becomes *archana*, worship. Whatever you need to do, it is your scripts; you have no choice. It is purely *Bhagavan* in the form of appropriateness, as the action that is to be done. The entire life of *vyavahara* is



*Bhagavan*. This is what the *Vedic* vision is; this is the idea of duty, *svakarma*. Whatever is appropriate, even sending a prompt e-mail, is *svakarma*.

But it must be appropriate, not wasteful. Extravagance and unnecessary expenditure even when you may be able to afford it is wrong because money is Lakshmi. You respect her.

A *vaidika* is a person who is exposed to the reality of living. The word 'know' has an object because it is a verb. What do you know? I know *Dharma*. It is an object that I know. However, it is not an external object, it is embedded in the cognitive person, and it is available for me when I have to make choices.

Therefore, *Dharma* is in the minds of human beings and if the *vaidika-Dharma* is to be protected, the one who upholds *vaidika-Dharma*, the *vaidika-dharmin* has to be protected.

### Our Society Is Duty-based

We need to be objective, which means we need to be

in touch with *Isvara*. Everything is *Isvara*. Our problem is the profundity of our tradition. It is not a simple doctrine or set of beliefs but a profound system that is alive and dynamic in every moment. It is profound, the appropriate action to be done at this time is *Isvara* and it is *svakarma*.

You play different roles with different scripts appropriate to a given situation. The script is *svakarma*, duty. Our society is duty based. You have to learn how to perform your duties efficiently.

What is marriage? It is a merger. Then yield! You have to yield to make the other person happy. It is not one-sided. Somebody chose



you, you are lucky to be able to play the role of husband or wife, and you have your duties. Duties are never one-sided. The concept of one-sided duties is wrong and creates so many family problems.

In your daily duties you are also alive to the *Devas*. You do not take the sun, the air, the water, your forefathers, your masters for granted; you remember them and pay your dues to them. It is the Hindu way of living, the *Vedic* way of living, because you are connected to all of them. Since you are benefiting from them, *svakarma* includes your obligations to all of them. It is all one *yajna*. The entire life becomes a *yajna*. It is the *vaidika's* life.

### The Roles We Play

You are basically a devotee, *bhakta*. It is the *bhakta* who plays all roles. First, you are a *bhakta*, last you

are a *bhakta*. In the middle, of course, you are a *bhakta* playing different roles. For you, as a *bhakta*, it is a wonder that you are untouched playing all the roles in your life. Untouched, unaffected, you can lend joy to everything. An example very often used to illustrate this is the lotus leaf. The water on the lotus leaf does not wet the leaf, not one bit. Not only that, the lotus leaf lends a glow to the water on it. The droplets shine like pearls while the lotus leaf itself is untouched by the water.

This is how your life should be. Basically you are a devotee who is unaffected by the numerous problems that every role has. You confine the problems to the role, you remain unaffected. It is true, but more than that, you lend a glow to all that you do with the freedom that you enjoy.

When there is freedom while playing a role, you are a role model for everyone. Your awareness that you are basically related to *Isvara* gives you the space to enjoy being a son/daughter, husband/wife and so on. The devotee is free from being affected. So, I leave you as a devotee. □

